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SUICIDE SQUAD
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SUICIDE SQUAD
JOHN OSTRANDER
DAVID M. DeVRIES
LUKE McDONNELL
FLASH BACK!
CAPTAIN BOOMER
McDONNELL & SHERWOOD

GRAVE MATTERS

DAILY PLANET

FRIDAY, JULY 27, 1990

PRICE: 40¢

ATOM KILLED

Ray Palmer, famed superhero, killed in mysterious blast!

by John Ostrander and David M. deVries, Staff Writers

Ray Palmer, better known to the public as his meta-human alter-ego THE ATOM, was evidently killed last night by an explosive blast which swept through his apartment last night. The immediate cause of the blast is not known. Given the number of felons and enemies the Atom had acquired over the years, the police were not ruling out homicide although no villain or organization has yet stepped forward to claim responsibility.

Palmer made his secret identity known when he abandoned civilization to join an alien race of miniature beings in the jungles of South America. He abruptly returned to America when that race was mysteriously exterminated . . .

KIM YALE MISSING—Fans Upset . . . . . PG. 2

LUKE MCDONNELL GUEST at ARTIST gallery Events . . . . . see

New comic! TODD KLEIN'S LETTERMAN!

CARL GAFFORD on the new COLORS for fall . . . . Fashion

Let's put DEATH back into DEADLINES . . . . . DAN RASPLER, editorial

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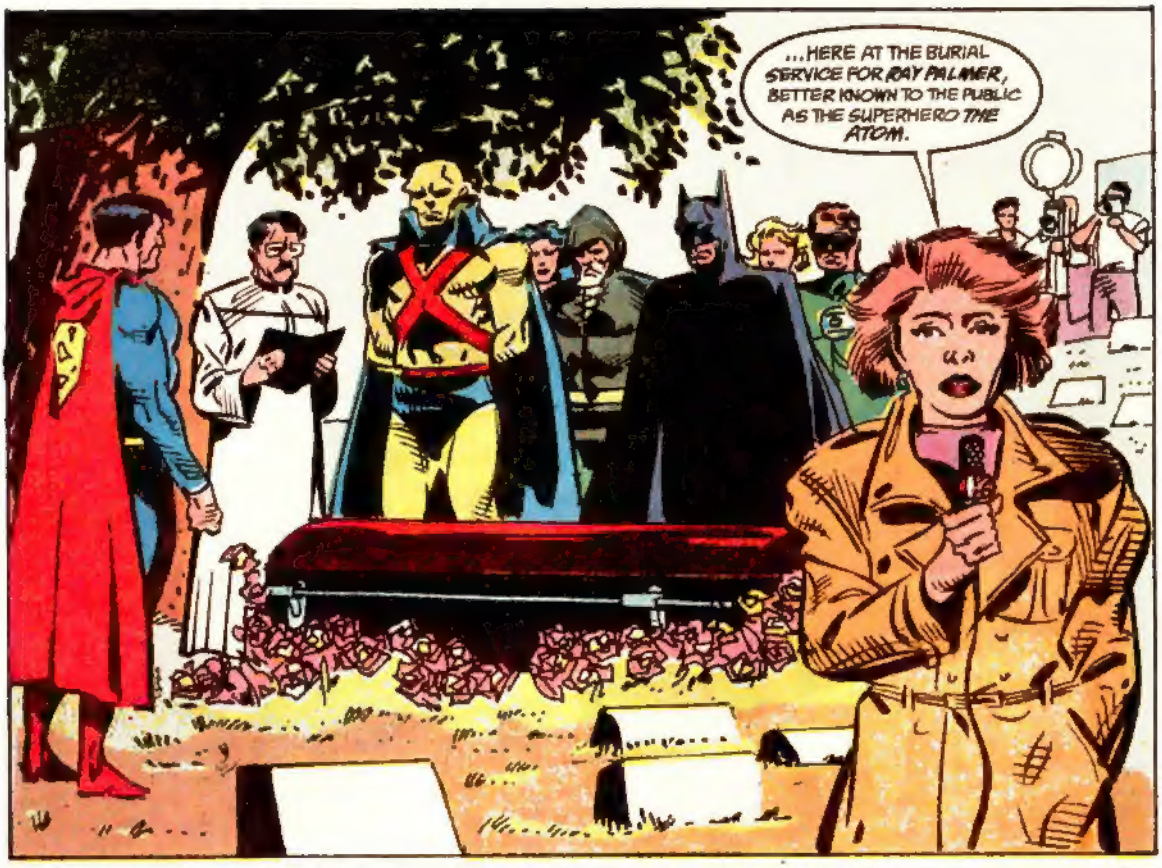

...HERE AT THE BURIAL SERVICE FOR RAY PALMER, BETTER KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC AS THE SUPERHERO THE ATOM.

THE SERVICE HAS BEEN ATTENDED BY MANY OF PALMER'S PEERS IN THE METAHUMAN COMMUNITY, INCLUDING FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE JUSTICE LEAGUE, OF WHICH PALMER WAS AN EARLY MEMBER.
EXCUSE ME, MARTIAN MANHUNTER, HAVE THERE BEEN ANY FURTHER LEADS INTO WHAT CAUSED THE EXPLOSION THAT KILLED PALMER?

THE AUTHORITIES ARE STILL INVESTIGATING. I AM TOLD SUICIDE HAS NOT BEEN RULED OUT ALTHOUGH THAT SEEMS UNLIKELY, GIVEN THE RAY PALMER I KNEW.
THE JUSTICE LEAGUE WILL BE MONITORING THE INVESTIGATION VERY CLOSELY. RAY WAS A VALUED MEMBER OF THE EARLY LEAGUE; MORE IMPORTANT HE WAS A FRIEND.
RRRINNG

IF THIS WAS MURDER, YOU CAN BE ASSURED THE LEAGUE WILL TAKE A PERSONAL HAND IN THIS.
COMING THROUGH.
RIGHT.
THE LEAGUE TAKES CARE OF ITS OWN.
THAT WAS JOHN J'ONZZ, THE MARTIAN MANHUNTER AND TEAM LEADER OF JUSTICE LEAGUE AMERICA ON THE DEATH OF RAY PALMER, THE ATOM. WE'RE GOING TO SEE IF WE CAN TALK WITH HIS EX-WIFE, JEAN LORING...
TURN IT OFF.
CLIK
SURE
THE JUSTICE LEAGUE COULD BE TROUBLE. I KNOW THEM. ONCE THEY GET INVOLVED, ESPECIALLY BATMAN...!
THEY WON'T GET INVOLVED. I'LL DEAL WITH MAX. WE'LL MAKE IT WORK. STOP WORRYING.
RAY PALMER'S DEAD.
YOU'RE THE ATOM NOW.
3

"RELAX FOR A FEW DAYS, NO NEW MISSIONS ARE LINED UP YET AND WON'T BE UNTIL CAPTAIN BOOMERANG AND DEADSHOT GET BACK.

"I SENT LAWTON TO KEEP BOOMERBUTT COMPANY WHILE HE WENT HOME FOR A FEW DAYS. TOWN CALLED KURRUMBURRA, OUTSIDE OF MELBOURNE. HERE'S A STRANGE COINCIDENCE--THEY'RE ALSO GOING TO A FUNERAL. BOOMERANG'S MOTHER."

ODD TO BE HOME AGAIN, BOOMERBUTT?

YUH. LISTEN, MATE--MAKE IT GEORGE WHILE WE'RE HERE, EH? 'S ONLY MY BLEEDIN' NAME, AFTER ALL.

STREWTH, I'M BLOODY SURPRISED IT'S HERE AT ALL, WHAT WITH HOW THE INVASION KICKED THE HELL OUTA MELBOURNE AND ALL. LOOKS PRETTY MUCH AS WHEN I LEFT IT.

YOU CLOSE TO YOUR FAMILY, BOOM--GEORGE?

NAH. MY MUM WAS THE BEST OF THE WHOLE ROTTEN BUNCH. THE REST CARED STUFF-ALL ABOUT ME.

RIGHT. MIGHT AS WELL GO IN. GOTTA PICK UP OLD "UNCLE WALT" AT THE STATION IN A HALF HOUR.

WE'LL DO THE RIGHT THING BY MUM AND THEN SHAKE THE DUST FROM THIS HOLE. KURRUMBURRA--MEANS "PILE OF MAGGOTS" TO THE ABOS. TOO RIGHT.

YEAH...WELL. THIS IS ME MATE, FLOYD LAWTON. LAWTON, MY FATHER IAN AND MY BIG BROTHER, TOM.
SO...YOU'VE LOBBED IN, HAVE YOU?
LOOKS LIKE IT, DON'T IT?
TOO BAD YOU DIN'T STOP IN THE LAST TIME YER WAS IN OZ. YER MUM WAS ALIVE THEN. SHE MIGHT'VE LIKED TO SEE YA.
LAST TIME I WAS IN OZ I WAS FIGHTING A BLOODY WAR! AND WHAT WERE YOU DOING AT THE TIME, B'GIDES HIDIN' UNDER THE BED?
WHY...!
I DON'T THINK THIS IS WHAT MUM WOULD'VE LIKED. HAVE A FAIR GO, EH--IN HER MEMORY?
RIGHT. TOO RIGHT, TOM. LET'S SEE TO THE OTHER "GUESTS," EH?
STUFF THE PAIR O' THEM!
GUESS YOUR OLD MAN STILL HOLDS YOUR BECOMING "CAPTAIN BOOMERANG" AGAINST YOU.
AHH, DAD'S ALWAYS BEEN A BLOODY BASTARD TO ME. TOM WAS HIS REAL PET, EVEN WHEN WE WERE KIDS.
GEORGE! G'DAY, YA OLD DINGO!

WELLL, G'DAY YERSELF, YA BLOODY GREAT GALAH!
HERE, TAKE A FOZZIE. YER LOOKIN' NAKED AND IT'S A DISGUSTIN' SIGHT.
TA, MATE.
MICK, THIS HERE'S FLOYD LAWTON. LAWTON, THIS IS MICK WENTWORTH-- ME OLDEST MATE. HIM AND ME GOES WAY BACK, I CAN TELL YOU.
G'DAY, LAWTON.
UH... G'DAY.
I WAS THINKIN' THE OTHER DAY HOW LONG WE HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER. Y'REMEMBER WHEN WE FIRST MET?
HELL, YES. IT WAS THE DAY TOM MOVED OUT TO BE ON HIS ACE.
"SAME DAY I'D MADE MY FIRST BLOODY BOOMERANG-- AND COULDN'T GET NOBODY TO LOOK AT ME."
WHAT--ARE YOU TOO UPPITY FOR US, TOM HARKNESS? I MEAN, I'M PROUD OF YER, SON, OF COURSE I AM, BUT YOU SHOULD STAY ON HERE, HELP WITH THE FAMILY.
OH, IAN! LEAVE THE BOY ALONE; HE'S DOING THE RIGHT THING. TOM'S A BRIGHT LAD AND DESERVES A CHANCE IN THE BIG SMOKE.
HEY!
6

YER GETTIN' TOO UPPITY YERSELF, BETTY! THIS TOWN AND I WAS GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU WHEN YOU WERE TOM'S AGE!
IF YOU'D STAYED IN MELBOURNE, YOU'D HAVE BEEN A RIGHT MESS!
HEY!
HEY DAD!!
WHAT? WHAT IS IT YOU WANT THEN? EH? WHAT?!
MADE SOMETHING INNA SCHOOL TODAY. TEACHER GAVE ME TOP MARKS FOR IT. WANNA SEE WHAT?
NOT REALLY.
IAAAANNN...
=SIGH= ALL RIGHT. SHOW US WHATCHER GOT, THEN.
IS THIS ALL? AHHRR, IT'S NUTHIN' BUT A DUMB ABO TOY!
YA BLOODY DINGO!
IAN, IT WOULDN'T HAVE KILLED YOU TO BE NICE TO THE LAD!
AHHRR, IT'S A TOUGH WORLD OUT THERE. BETTER HE LEARN NOW.

"WE LIVE OUT BY THE EDGE OF TOWN, AS Y'MIGHT HAVE GATHERED. NOT MANY KIDS MY AGE ABOUT, AT THE TIME. SO I WAS ON ME LONESOME, TOSSING ME BOOMERANG.
"GOOD THING TO PLAY CATCH WITH, WHEN Y'GOT NO ONE ELSE T'PLAY WITH. TURNED OUT, THERE WAS."
HEY!
YER NEW.
YUH. MY OLDIES JUST MOVED IN UP THE STREET.
WANNA DEKKO AT MY BOOMERANG? MADE IT MESELF.
HAW! THAT'S A BLOODY TOY ONLY AN ABBO WOULD USE! WHAT A PRAWN! HAW!
GOR-GOR-GOR-GIAH!
SEE? EVEN THE KOOKABURRA'S LAUGHIN' AT CHA!
I'LL GIVE YOU AN ABBO TOY!
8

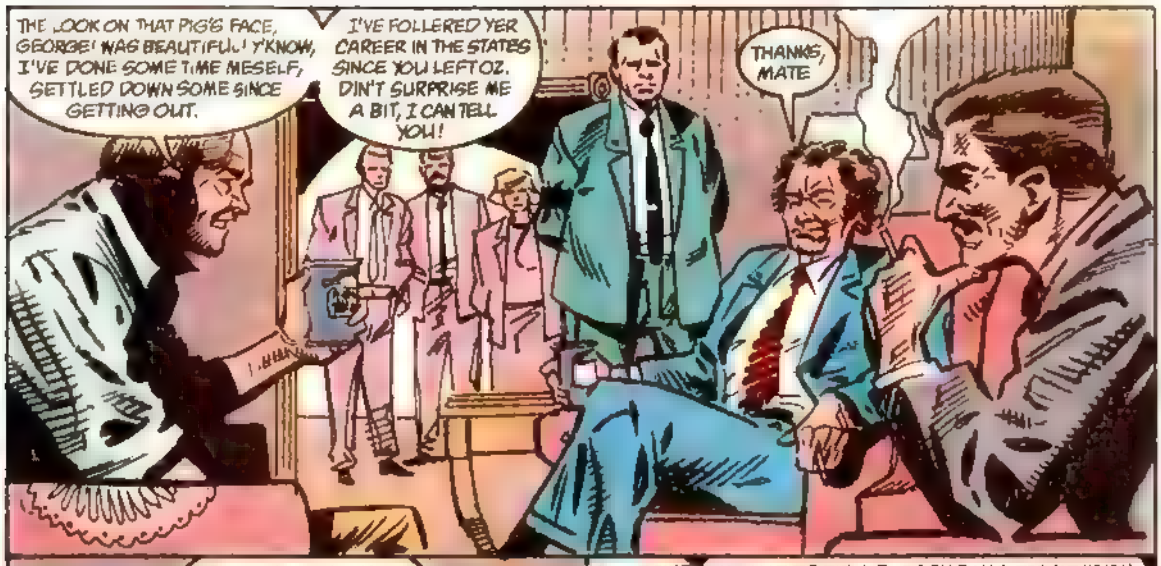
KRAK!
WHUP
FWUMP!

STRENTH! 'S DEAD! YUH KILLED IT!
WHAT A RIPPER!

"THAT SEALED IT--ME AN' MICK WERE FIRM MATES AFTER THAT. WE WAS ALWAYS TOGETHER, RAISING ALL KINDS OF HELL.
"BOTH ME PARENTS DISAPPROVED OF MICK, BUT SO FAR AS I WAS CONCERNED, THEY COULD GET STUFFED."
"AHH, YER MUM WAS ALL RIGHT, GEORGE, FOR AN ADULT. BAILED US OUT WHEN THE COPS WOULD NICK US EXCEPT FOR THAT LAST TIME."

"GREWTH -- WHAT A COCK-UP THAT WAS. WHAT WERE WE -- 18, MAYBE? WE THOUGHT THAT GENERAL STORE WAS A DEAD CERT, TOO..."
HERE -- WHAT'S THE DAMAGE ON THIS?
$5.00
SOCKS M-L $2.00
NO CREDIT NO CHECKS
OI! YOU BY THE CIGS! WHATTAYA THINK YER DOIN'?!
$5.00
SCARPER, MATE!
NO YOU DON'T!
OW! LEGGO, YA BLOODY GREAT APE!
KRAK!

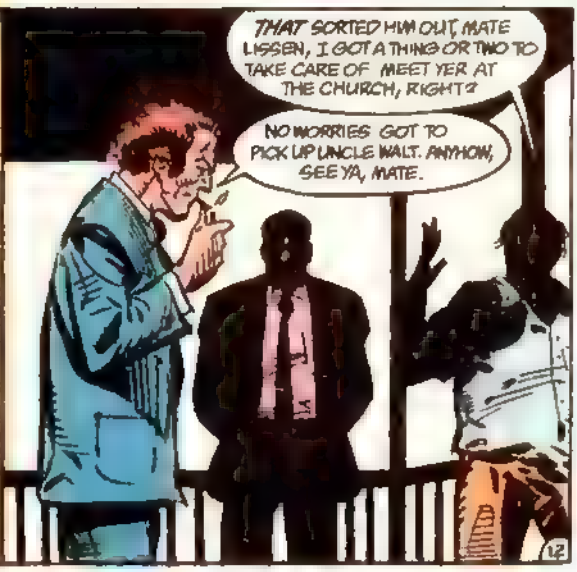
STOPPEM!
HEY!
BARNEY PUB
BARNEY PUB
BLOODY HELL! A WALLOPER!
GEORGE! I'M NICKED!
BLOODY HELL!
KRAK
BRILLIANT SHOT, MATE!
HELL! I WAS AIMIN' FOR HIS BLOODY HEAD!


THE LOOK ON THAT PIG'S FACE, GEORGE! WAS BEAUTIFUL! Y'KNOW, I'VE DONE SOME TIME MESELF, SETTLED DOWN SOME SINCE GETTING OUT.
I'VE FOLLERED YER CAREER IN THE STATES SINCE YOU LEFT OZ. DIN'T SURPRISE ME A BIT, I CAN TELL YOU!
THANKS, MATE

GEORGE, WOULD YOU MIND KEEPING IT DOWN? THINK OF DAD'S FEELINGS, EH?
GET STUFFED.

YOU DON'T OWN ME. YOU NEVER DID.
YOU NEVER DID A BLOODY THING FOR ME WHEN I WAS A KID, SO DON'T COME ALL HIGH AND BLOODY MIGHTY NOW!

LET ME TELL YOU, MATE -- I'VE SEEN AND DONE THINGS THAT'D MAKE YOUR HAIR CURL! AND I'LL BE DAMNED IF I'LL TAKE LIP FROM A BLOODY ACCOUNTANT!


THAT SORTED HIM OUT, MATE LISSEN, I GOT A THING OR TWO TO TAKE CARE OF MEET YER AT THE CHURCH, RIGHT?
NO WORRIES GOT TO PICK UP UNCLE WALT. ANYHOW, SEE YA, MATE.

'THINK OF DAD'S FEELINGS'.. THERE'S A BLOODY LAUGH! WHEN DID HE THINK OF MINE? WHEN DID HE THINK OF ANYONE'S BUT HIS OWN?!
DID YOU KNOW HE WAS READY TO HAND ME OVER TO THE POLICE AFTER THAT LITTLE FRACAS WE JUST TOLD YOU ABOUT?
DON'T BE A DILL, IAN! YOU HAND THE BOY OVER--WITH HIS JUVENILE RECORD-- HE'S LIKELY TO GO TO JAIL!
AND MAYBE THAT WOULDN'T BE A BAD THING! IT MIGHT MAKE HIM WAKE UP TO HIMSELF! AND DON'T CALL ME A DILL, YOU BLOODY COW!
FIGURE I'LL GO UP TO MELBOURNE MAYBE TOM CAN HELP ME GET A JOB.
YOU KEEP AWAY FROM TOM! I ALREADY TALKED WITH HIM AND HE WANTS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOU!
STOP YOUR LYING, IAN HARKNESS! I SWEAR I'VE HAD A GUT FULL OF YOU AND YOUR STINKING ATTITUDE TO YOUR OWN SON!
MY SON?!
I'LL GIVE YOU "MY SON," YOU BLOODY BIKE!
KRAK!

BASTARD!
WHAM
OH DEAR, THAT'S TORN IT FOR CERTAIN YOU'LL HAVE TO GO TO MELBOURNE
I'LL GIVE YOU SOME MONEY TO KEEP YOU AND THEN MEET ME AT THE MACQUARRIE PUB IN A WEEK, ALL RIGHT?
"SO I SPENT A MISERABLE WEEK HOLED UP IN A MISERABLE RENTED FLEA PIT MUM WAS AS GOOD AS HER WORD -- AS ALWAYS "
THIS HERE'S A PLANE TICKET TO THE STATES -- TO A PLACE CALLED CENTRAL CITY
GOT AN OLD FRIEND THERE, A YANK NAME OF W W WIGGINS RUNS A SMALL TOY FACTORY THINKS HE CAN SELL BOOMERANGS WITH YOUR HELP HE'LL SEE YOU RIGHT
THANKS, MUM
SOUNDS ALL RIGHT OZ IS GETTING A LITTLE TOO SMALL FOR ME ANYWAY
MISS YOU, OF COURSE BUT DAD AND TOM CAN GET STUFFED. DID YOU KNOW TOM NEVER RETURNED ANY OF MY CALLS? STUFF HIM. I'M OFF
DIDN'T KNOW IT THEN, BUT THAT WAS THE LAST TIME I'D SEE HER LIVING
AH THERE'S UNCLE WALT
14

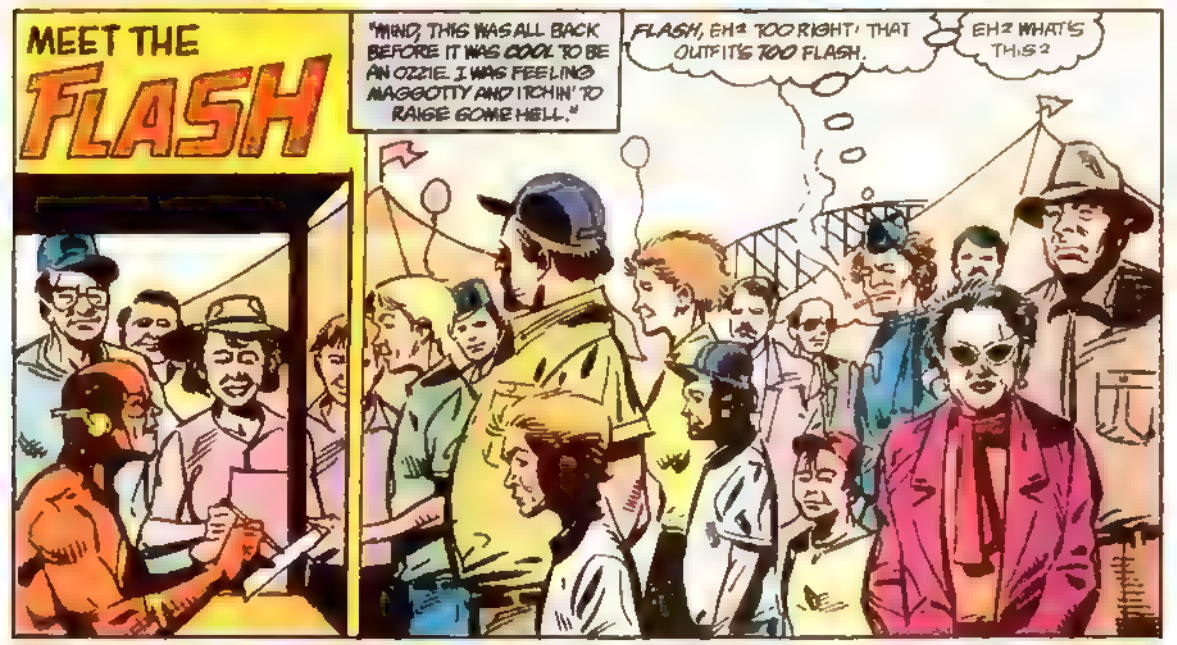
ONE SET OF INTRODUCTIONS LATER...
YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T HAVE COME THIS FAR, WALT YER TOO OLD AND YOU LOOK LIKE HELL
NO, MY BOY, I OWE AT LEAST THIS MUCH TO YOUR DEAR MOTHER TO HER MEMORY.
THIS OLD GOD'S GOT A LOT TO ANSWER FOR, LAWTON. HE'S THE ONE WHO CREATED "CAPTAIN BOOMERANG"!
PLEASE...
IT'S FAIR DINKUM! YOU KNOW IT!
"YOU THOUGHT THE BOOMERANG WAS GOING TO BE THE BIGGEST THING SINCE THE HULA HOOP. WHY I LET YOU TALK ME INTO WEARING THAT LAIRY OUTFIT, I'LL NEVER KNOW."
CAPTAIN BOOMERANG
AND NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, BOYS AND GIRLS, THE AMAZING CAPTAIN BOOMERANG WILL DEMONSTRATE THE AUSTRALIAN TOY SENSATION, THE W. W. WIGGING BOOMERANG!
WHAT GOES UP MUST COME DOWN, BUT WHAT GOES OUT DON'T NECESSARILY COME BACK--UNLESS IT'S AN AUTHENTIC WIGGING BOOMERANG!
ISN'T THAT SIMPLY AMAZING? LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, A BIG HAND, IF YOU WILL, FOR CAPTAIN BOOMERANG!

I THINK THEY'RE STUPID. MY DAD BOUGHT ONE AND IT DIDN'T DO NOTHINGS.
WELL, THAT'S BECAUSE YER DAD'S A BLOODY STUPID BUGGER WHO COULDN'T SPIT INTO THE OCEAN IF HE WAS STANDING IN IT!

HOT-DOGS $1.00
IS HE? BET HE CAN HIT YOUR MOUTH!
GET HIM, PA!
YOU WANT TO BARNEY? COME ON, GALAH! I'VE HAD IT WITH YOU YANKS! YOU CAN ALL STUFF IT!

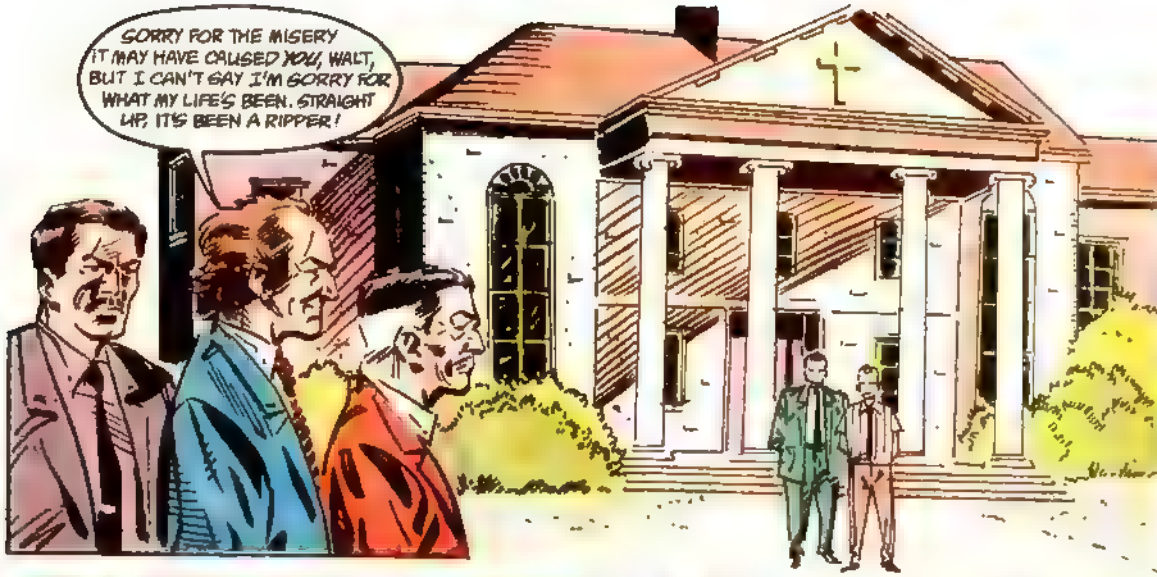
THAT'S ALL FOR NOW, FOLKS! NEXT SHOW--LATER! MUCH LATER!
STUFF YERSELVES!
ENTER
RELAX, MY BOY.
I'VE HAD IT! NO, I MEAN IT! WE'VE BEEN DOING THIS TWO YEARS AND IT'S GOING NOWHERE!
I WANT OUT!

LOOK, TAKE A BREAK WANDER THE FAIR A BIT COOL DOWN. ENJOY YOURSELF AND LET PEOPLE SEE THE COSTUME. IT'LL GET BETTER, YOU'LL SEE
I... AHHH, ALL RIGHT


MEET THE FLASH
"MIND, THIS WAS ALL BACK BEFORE IT WAS COOL TO BE AN OZZIE. I WAS FEELING MAGGOTTY AND ITCHIN' TO RAISE SOME HELL."
FLASH, EH? TOO RIGHT! THAT OUTFIT'S TOO FLASH.
EH? WHAT'S THIS?

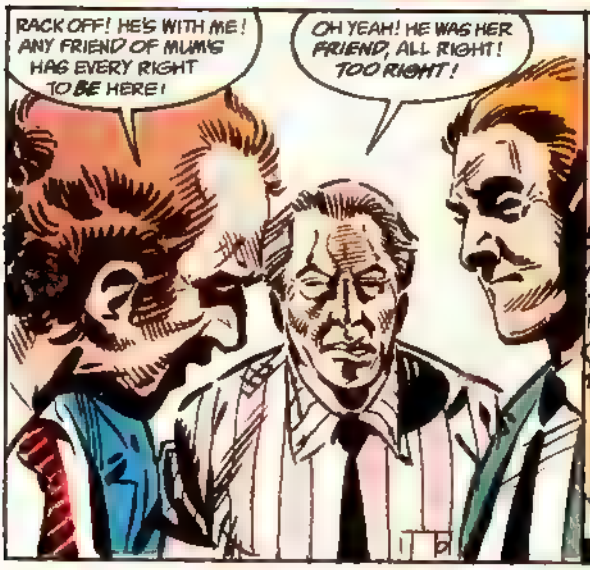
GIT THE HELL OUTA MUH WAY! WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU PEOPLE?! DON'T YOU KNOW WHO I AM?
STREWTH! TYPICAL YANKS! HERE I AM, DRESSED LIKE BILLBOARD, AND NO ONE PAYS YA ANY ATTENTION!
"ACTUALLY, SOMEONE WAS JUST THE KACK IT WAS THE FLASH."
HEY, YOU! PUT THAT WALLET BACK!

"IT WAS LIKE BEING AT THE GENERAL STORE ALL OVER AGAIN."
AH, BLOODY HELL!
KRAK!
UHNN!
DID YOU SEE THAT?
FWUP
HE BEAT THE FLASH!
CAPTAIN BOOMERANG BEAT THE FLASH!
COOOOL!
"FLASH TOOK ME FOR GRANTED THAT FIRST TIME -- WHICH HE NEVER DID AGAIN 'S FUNNY, INNIT? ONLY IN THAT DAFT 'CAPTAIN BOOMERANG' GET-UP DID I GET ANY RESPECT
"AND I GOT BETTER, TOO! TRICK BOOMERANGS -- THE LOT I WAS GOOD, EVERYONE KNEW IT PAPERS CALLED ME 'DIGGER' 'CAUSE I WAS FROM OZ, BUT I DIDN'T CARE I MADE MY MARK! THE WORLD HEARD OF ME!"
18


SORRY FOR THE MISERY IT MAY HAVE CAUSED YOU, WALT, BUT I CAN'T SAY I'M SORRY FOR WHAT MY LIFE'S BEEN. STRAIGHT UP, IT'S BEEN A RIPPER!

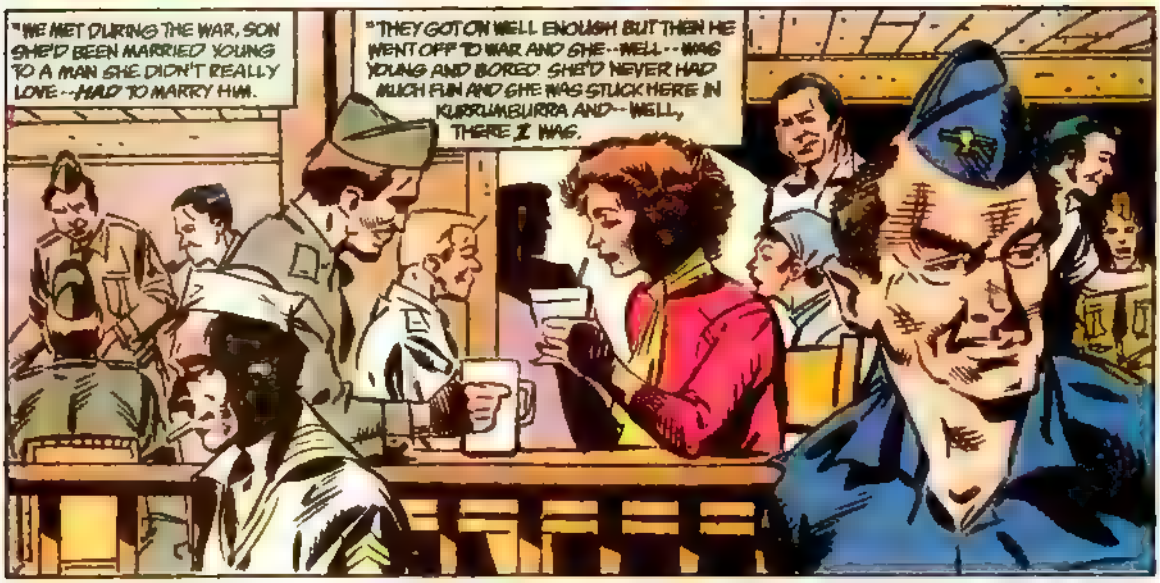
NO! NO! I WON'T WEAR THIS! THIS BASTARD HAS NO BUSINESS HERE! GET THE HELL AWAY, WIGGINS!

I THINK IT WOULD BE BETTER ALL THE WAY AROUND, MR WIGGINS, IF YOU JUST LEFT
YES YES, I UNDERSTAND.
WELL, I DON'T!


RACK OFF! HE'S WITH ME! ANY FRIEND OF MUM'S HAS EVERY RIGHT TO BE HERE!
OH YEAH! HE WAS HER FRIEND, ALL RIGHT! TOO RIGHT!

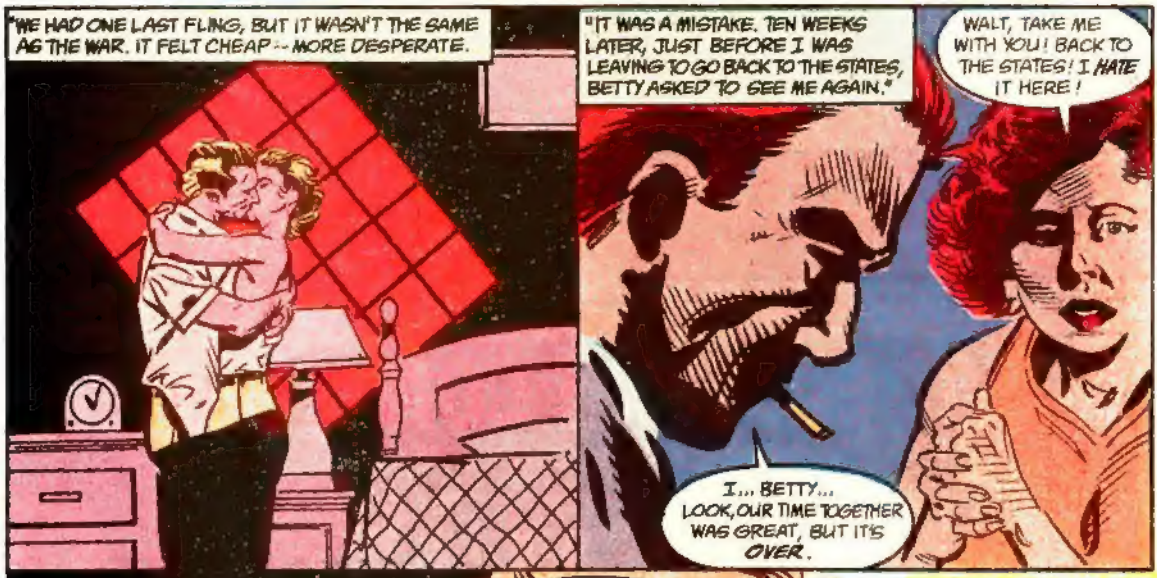
HERE! WHAT'RE YOU SAYING?
ASK HIM!! GO AHEAD! ASK THE BLOODY BASTARD HOW WELL HE KNEW YER MUM!
DAAAD.

WHAT'S HE PRATTLING ON ABOUT, WALT?
WALT!
OKAY. WHAT'S THE DINKUM? HOW GOOD FRIENDS WERE YOU AND MUM?


"WE MET DURING THE WAR, SON SHE'D BEEN MARRIED YOUNG TO A MAN SHE DIDN'T REALLY LOVE--HAD TO MARRY HIM.
"THEY GOT ON WELL ENOUGH BUT THEN HE WENT OFF TO WAR AND SHE--WELL--WAS YOUNG AND BORED. SHE'D NEVER HAD MUCH FUN AND SHE WAS STUCK HERE IN KURRUMBURRA AND--WELL, THERE I WAS.

"I OFFERED HER ADVENTURE--A BIT OF FUN. SHE NEEDED THAT
JUST AS LONG AS YOU UNDERSTAND, WALTER--I DON'T DO THIS WITH EVERY YANK
JUST SO LONG AS YOU DO IT WITH ME, DOLL

ALL RIGHT, SO MUM MESSED AROUND ON THE SIDE SOME DURING THE WAR. SO WHAT?
IT DIDN'T END WITH THE WAR, SON.
"I CAME THROUGH AS A SALESMAN FOR THIS TOY COMPANY -- THE ONE I TOOK OVER LATER -- AND GOT BACK IN CONTACT WITH YOUR MUM.


"WE HAD ONE LAST FLING, BUT IT WASN'T THE SAME AS THE WAR. IT FELT CHEAP -- MORE DESPERATE.
"IT WAS A MISTAKE. TEN WEEKS LATER, JUST BEFORE I WAS LEAVING TO GO BACK TO THE STATES, BETTY ASKED TO SEE ME AGAIN."
WALT, TAKE ME WITH YOU! BACK TO THE STATES! I HATE IT HERE!
I... BETTY... LOOK, OUR TIME TOGETHER WAS GREAT, BUT IT'S OVER.

IT ISN'T FOR ME! I'M PREGNANT, WALT!
I'M CARRYING YOUR CHILD!

STREWTH!
I FELT BAD FOR HER, OF COURSE, BUT... IT JUST WASN'T FEASIBLE...!
STREWTH, NO WONDER IAN HATED ME GUTS FROM THE MOMENT I WAS BORN! MY STORY'S BEEN STUFFED SINCE PAGE ONE!
AND YOU! ALL THE TIME YOU WAS JUST PAYIN' OFF YOUR OWN BLOODY GUILT! WELL, GOD YOU TOO! YOU AIN'T MY BLOODY DAD, GO RACK OFF!
HOW DO YOU LIKE THIG, EH? TALK ABOUT A SHONKY DEAL!
SO WHAT AM I--AUSTRALIAN, OR A YANK, OR WHAT? THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS FOR SURE IS IN A PINE BOX--IF SHE KNEW!
YOU'RE AN ORPHAN--LIKE ME. YOU'RE WHAT YOU MADE OF YOUR-SELF.
LET'S GET SOME DRINKS, GET OUR GEAR, AND CLEAR OUT. OR HAVEN'T YOU HAD ENOUGH OF HOME?
Y'KNOW, YER A GOOD MATE, LAWTON. BUT YOU TALK TOO BLOODY MUCH.
LET'S GO WHERE WE'RE LOVED. BACK TO MOMMA WALLER.
NEXT: THE CHAOS SERPENT

SUICIDE NOTES

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Dear John, Kim, Dan, and Bob,

The "Phoenix Gambit" looks like yet another spectacular tale in the chronicles of the SUICIDE SQUAD—and right on the heels of the outstanding Lashina tale, to boot! Don't ever let it be said you don't keep the momentum going, and the interest of your readers fully grasped.

Amanda still seems to be her same old self. Prison life hasn't mellowed her one bit, I guess. I'm glad. Where would this book be without the Wall and her big, bad attitude? She certainly is the centerpiece of this book, and I can't wait for her to get the team back in action.

Good to see Batman in these pages again, and I eagerly anticipate his "teaming up" with Amanda in the next issue. These two make a dynamite team. I truly believe that deep down inside, each of them holds a healthy amount of respect for the other, although neither of them would ever admit to it. These are two of the strongest individuals, character-wise, in all of comicdom. They are so very different that they balance each other well, and they always have the most interesting dialogue. Great rapport on page 22, panel 5. Don't laugh hysterically at this, but am I the only one to detect some *slight* sexual tension there, or at least an attraction? ... Okay, so now *I'm* laughing hysterically.

Thanks so much for the gripping mini-poster. All of the Squad members looked fabulous, especially Ivy and the close-up of Amanda. I was a little distressed to notice Count Vertigo missing, as well as Major Victory. I hope that doesn't mean you've got dire plans in store for these two. I must admit that things don't look too promising for my pal Werner. I pray that the mysterious figure on page 4 hasn't contracted Deadshot to murder our man from Vlatava.

It looks like Waller and the Dark Knight are going to try to recruit old members of the Squad, as well as bring in some new blood. I'd like to offer the following as possible candidates for membership: Artemis (from Injustice, Unlimited), Black Spider, Phobia, Copperhead, Cheetah (did she die in WONDER WOMAN?), Bloodsport, any of the Masters of Disaster crew, and of course, Onyx.

Guest stars I'd like to see are: Nightwing, Obsidian, Riddler, Aquaman, Black Manta, and Gloss.

Take care and I'll be talking to you again soon.

A loyal fan always,
David J. Harrington
210½ Broadway
Fort Edward, NY 12828

* * * * *

Dear Editor,

Let me congratulate you and your co-workers on your great work on the current issues of SUICIDE SQUAD. "The Phoenix Gambit" has proven to be the most interesting story for the Squad yet. Furthermore, Geof Isherwood's artwork has greatly enhanced the pages of this book. Great going, guys!!

SUICIDE SQUAD may be considered one of the more violent and unusual comic books on sale. (Where did the seal of the Comics Code Authority go?) So far you guys have killed off Blockbuster, Multiplex, Mindboggler, Karin, the Enchantress, Rick Flag, Psi, the Thinker, the Weasel, Mr. 104, Shrike, Duchess, Dr. Light, Briscoe, and Flo. Maybe you should include a file, specifically a Who's Who file, on all the people you've "terminated." (Why not in an annual?)

One of the SQUAD's main features I found to my liking is its rotating cast. Another thing I couldn't help loving is the use of super-villains rather than goody-goody superheroes, and I'm certainly glad to see that the Squad is really living up to its name. But ever since Waller's incarceration and the Squad's disbandment, all this may change. (What are you guys up to?) In fact, you guys left a lot of things hanging like Kobra, Nightshade, Nemesis, Darkseid, and William Hell.

About Kobra, he's been stuck in Belle Reve since issue number 30. When is he ever going to get out? Strikeforce Kobra wasn't in the annual or the Janus Directive. Isn't it about time they meet with the Squad and settle the score?

The Squad has appeared in a number of other comics like JLI, CHECKMATE!, and FIRESTORM. Are you planning more guest appearances? Since Rac Shade has his own title now, which I thought was going to be a limited series, shouldn't there be a connection to be explored between him and the Squad?

Yours truly,
R. Xandro Castaneda
2160 Paraiso Street
Dasmarinas Village
Makati, Metro Manila
Philippines

P.S. It's been two years and the Squad hasn't gotten another annual. Are you guys planning for that next year? P.P.S. Thanks for the poster! Mabuhay!

No word on an annual yet, Xandro.

We took the Comics Code seal off the covers since the book is no longer being offered on newsstands, only at specialty shops, Xandro.

Thanks for the list of dead guys, Xandro.

Kobra was released from Belle Reve by The Ghost in CAPTAIN ATOM #40. Also in that issue, Kobra faked his own death.

And good call on William Hell/Heller, Xandro. As you recall, he was the man pulling Deadshot's strings.

By the way, the new SHADE, THE CHANGING MAN ongoing series is by Pete Milligan, Chris Bachalo, and Mark Pennington, and I don't think it's going to be too involved with the Suicide Squad, Xandro.

Cool name, by the way.

* * * * *

Dear Dan and Everyone Involved with Suicide Squad,

So, according to your poster in SS #40, the new permanent (?) membership of the SS will include Bronze Tiger, Vixen, Ravan, Poison Ivy, Capt. Boomerang, and possibly Stalnoivolk, huh? Well, I guess that's okay, but I wish you could have pictured Count Vertigo or even Nemesis along with them. It seems now that both of them will end up only appearing on some rare occasion, rather than in the more important cases. Deadshot may well become a traitor to the Squad, and Batman may learn to live with it. I mean, he may at first not agree with Amanda's methods, but later may "see the light," so to speak, of the organization itself. You know, he can even try to sign up the Joker, or one of his other foes, and try to tie them into a Squad mission, hoping that they get killed along the way.

In the months to come, I hope the Squad matures—with Batman's help of course—to become a government organization respected by America's citizens and heroes alike. Hey, a few years down the road, I can see the

likes of the JLI signing the Squad up to defeat a world-threatening menace that they were afraid of being killed by. It may never happen, but in comics, who knows? Long Live the Squad!

Carlos R. Melendez
315 Evergreen Avenue
Daly City, CA 94014

P.S. A few people I would love to see appear in this book in the near future are Icicle, Shadow Thief, Comm. Steel, the Tattooed Man (who you can kill off), and the Silver Ghost. Plus, is there any way that you can print me a list of every Squad member who has died in battle? It's hard to keep track.

Carlos, check out Xandro's letter for the list of the fallen.

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

A few notations on SUICIDE SQUAD #41.

Count Vertigo—I dig the dude's freedom fighter bit. I hope he'll return to active duty in the Squad once things at home are settled.

Stalnoivolk—If he weren't such a hard-liner, I'd consider the concept of teaming him with the Batman, rather than having him oppose the Dark Knight. I'm surprised the Steel Wolf didn't appear in the recent BATMAN three-parter set in the U.S.S.R., mostly because that might've been a natural meeting.

Vixen—Mari is quite comfortable in retirement from the crimefighting biz. Waller had to screw that up for the sake of recruitment, which brings to mind an idea: If Mari is needed for a future mission, let her use her present occupation as a cover, i.e., having Poison Ivy (who I'll get to in a sec) become a partner in her organization. It'll make an honest woman out of Ivy, but.....!

Poison Ivy—She is one hot babe, and I use hot in terms familiar to her profession, as well as her appearance. (Ooh la la!) Like I said, team her with Vixen if necessary.

Bronze Tiger—GIVE ME A BREAK!!! Ol' Benjy went back to the paint, which hasn't been used since issue 2 or 3. Whatever Sarge Steel did a couple of issues back, it's pushed Ben back to where he was when he'd been brainwashed by the Sensei several years back. A crossover with Richard Dragon is necessary and inevitable.

Captain Boomerang—Or should we say Digger Crusoe? Robinson Harkness? Anyway, the beard is a hoot. It is to laugh.

Ravan—Another seeking legitimacy for what he does best. Actually looks better in a suit.

Okay, who's the dweeb sending Deadshot after his ex-boss? A small voice tells me Floyd'll come to his senses by issue #43 and re-up with the Wall.

See you in thirty.

Jacob Gilbert
118 Fourth Street, Apt. 1
Troy, NY 12180

* * * * *

Dear Suicidals,

"The Phoenix Gambit" Part I looks like the start of a great storyline. Amanda's finally going to be in complete control, with no "higher authority" to answer to. And what's more, she stands to make a bundle from it! I wonder, will the Squad contract out to anyone, even if their interests run against those of the government? That would be an interesting story!

I'm a little concerned that this storyline may turn into "Batman guest-starring the Suicide Squad." I hope that won't happen. I mean, the guy's got three books to himself as it is! Remember, this is SUICIDE SQUAD, guest-starring Batman. So far it's been good, but please don't pander to the legions of Bat-fans!

It looks like the new Squad will be Poison Ivy, Bronze Tiger, Vixen, Captain Boomerang, and Ravan(?). I'm not sure that that's Ravan in the poster, but it looks like him. Deadshot's somewhere in the shadows, but his role's kind of unclear. I'm sure that'll be addressed as the story goes along.

If anyone was skeptical that Geof Isherwood could handle both the pencilling and inking on SUICIDE SQUAD, this issue should change their minds. Stunning work, especially on the fight scenes between Batman and Stalnoivolk.

In conclusion, I'd like to say keep up the great work!

Julio Diaz
8713 Linda Court
Tampa, FL 33604

* * * * *

Dear Dan,

"The PHOENIX Gambit"?!?! No!! Tell me it is not so. There should be a law! I am completely, entirely, and thoroughly sick of absolutely anything that in any way, manner, or form resembles a PHOENIX!! (Dark, light, purple, or gambitted.) Whew ... Just needed to get that out of my system.

Otherwise, not a bad story. SUICIDE SQUAD originally struck me as a second-rate book with second-rate stories about second-rate characters. This being the first SUICIDE SQUAD I've picked up since the Invasion crossover, I was pleasantly surprised at the quality. For the first time, Waller seemed interesting and with the potential to continue growing as a character (no pun intended). This bold and brassy woman really appealed to me. More important, this was the first time in many moons I was impressed with the use of Batman as a detective. These were the skills he was built on, before the gritty, dark realism effects overshadowed them. I could have done without the almost four-page fight between Batman and Gort, though. This is what I call the Mike Grell school of comics writing. Take one page of story and stretch it into at least four. A great waste of space and valuable story potential. The art, traditional and appealing. I loved Waller's grin. I normally wouldn't comment on the colors, but Carl Gafford's subtle use of browns with bolder violets and blues deserves a note of recognition.

All in all, a strong enough story for me to continue with "The P. Gambit." After that? Unlikely, but possible.

Steven M. Solomon
245 South Reno Street
Apartment #44
Los Angeles, CA 90057

* * * * *

Dear Suicidal Scribes,

Re: SUICIDE SQUAD #41 ... "The Phoenix Gambit" Part 2

What can I say? Colossal? Stupendous? Superb? Outstanding? Excellent? First-class? Premium? Choicest? Exquisite? High-grade? Tops? Exceptional? Superior? Striking? Supreme? Unique? Incomparable? Custom-made? Surprising? Transcendent? Priceless? Rare? Invaluable? Wonderful? Magnificent? Above par? Skillful? Superlative? Worthy? Refined? Well done? Cultivated? Desirable? Notable? Terrific? Sensational? Groovy? Sharp? Grade A? Classy? Top-notch? Attractive? Distinctive? Admirable? Yeah, I could say that SUICIDE SQUAD #41 was all these things and more!

funny, adj. 1. [Stirring to laughter] laughable, comic, comical, whimsical, amusing, entertaining, diverting, humorous, witty, jesting, jocular, waggish, droll, facetious, clever, mirthful, ludicrous, jolly, absurd, ridiculous, gay, sly, sportive, playful, merry, joyful, joyous, good-humored, glad, gleeful, jovial, hilarious, farcical, joking, side-splitting.

example: Boomerbutt—er ... Captain Boomerang in SUICIDE SQUAD #41

Thank you for giving me the time to tell you how I feel about SUICIDE SQUAD!! It is truly one of the better books on the market today.

Keep the faith,

Tad C. Ellsworth
1721 30th Street N.W.
Canton, OH 44709

* * * * *

And, lo! There came to be a Next Issue Box:

SUICIDE SQUAD #45 starts off our next major storyline, and trust me, it's a knockout.

It opens on Kobra walking through downtown Beirut, Lebanon...

See you then

—Dan Raspler
Editor